

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, January 16, 1797,
The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes.
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Ford.**

TO JAMES MADISON MAD. MSS.

Monticello Jan. 16. 97.

Dear Sir, —The usual accidents of the winter, ice, floods, rains, have prevented the Orange post from coming to Charlottesville the last post-day, so that we have nothing from Philadelphia the last week. I see however by the Richmond papers a probability that the choice of V. P. has fallen on me. I have written the enclosed letter therefore to Mr. Tazewell as a private friend, & have left it open for your perusal. It will explain its own object & I pray you & Mr. Tazewell to decide in your own discretion how it may best be used for its object, so as to avoid the imputation of an indecent forwardness in me.

I observe doubts are still expressed as to the validity of the Vermont election. Surely in so great a case, substance & not form should prevail. I cannot suppose that the Vermont constitution has been strict in requiring particular forms of expressing the legislative will. As far as my disclaimer may have any effect, I pray you to declare it on every occasion foreseen or not foreseen by me, in favor of the choice of the people substantially expressed, & to prevent the phaenomenon of a Pseudo-president at so early a day. Adieu. Yours affectionately.